

WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
August 1, 2022

The members of the City Council of the City of Phenix City, Alabama met at 3:00 p.m. Eastern Time for the regularly scheduled work session on Monday, August 1, 2022, at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center located at 3743 Moon Lake Drive, Phenix City, Alabama 36867. Upon roll call, the following members were present: Councilmember Arthur L. Day, Jr., Councilmember Vickey Carter Johnson, Councilmember R. Griff Gordy, and Mayor Eddie N. Lowe. Councilmember Steve Bailey was not present. Also present were City Manager Wallace Hunter, City Attorney James McKoon, and City Clerk Melony Lee. City Attorney Jimmy Graham was not present. Department Heads in attendance: Deputy Building Official Ray Rogers, City Engineer Angel Moore, Economic Development Manager Shaun Culligan, Economic Development Planning Director Tracie Hadaway, Finance Director Labrita King Copeland, Fire Chief Kris Kennedy, Golf Manager Mike Barber, Library Director Tammy Henry, Municipal Court Clerk Ruby White, Parks and Recreation Director Todd Hughes, Human Resources Generalist Eliza Phillips, Assistant Chief of Police George Staudinger, Utilities Engineer John Spraggins, and Utilities Director Charles Woody.

Upon a quorum being established, Mayor Lowe called the meeting to order.

Councilmember Gordy led the invocation.

Mayor Lowe advised there were no Requests to Address Council.

Mayor Lowe called upon Tracie Hadaway, Economic Development Planning Director, to discuss the actions taken by the Planning Commission at their July 26, 2022 meeting.

Mayor Lowe called upon City Clerk Melony Lee who discussed the following with Mayor and Council:

1. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on August 2, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
2. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet August 9, 2022 at 5:15 p.m.
3. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on August 15, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
4. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on August 16, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
5. Informed Council that the Alabama League of Municipalities will host the 3rd Congressional Luncheon August 18, 2022 from 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. EST in Opelika, Alabama. Councilmember Johnson and Councilmember Day advised they would like to be registered to attend the luncheon.
6. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet August 23, 2022 at 5:15 p.m.
7. Reminded Council that City Offices will be closed on September 5, 2022 in observance of Labor Day Holiday.
8. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on September 6, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center. This meeting will be held on a Tuesday afternoon due to the Labor Day Holiday.
9. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on September 7, 2022 at 9:00 a.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center. This meeting will be held on a Wednesday morning due to the Labor Day Holiday.

10. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet September 13, 2022 at 5:15 p.m.
11. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Work Session to be held on September 19, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. at the Martin Idle Hour Park Community Center.
12. Advised Council of a regular scheduled Council Meeting to be held on September 20, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. at the 5th Street South Youth Center.
13. Advised Council that the Planning Commission will meet September 27, 2022 at 5:15 p.m.
14. Reviewed upcoming board appointments.

City Clerk Melony Lee asked Mayor and Council to review information passed out concerning the Plaque dedication for the Public Safety Building.

Councilmember Johnson inquired about the old Fire Department Training Facility that sits off of 20th Avenue where Cobb Hospital was once located and the new Phenix City Housing Authority Project is being developed. Councilmember Johnson asked if the City still owned that building. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the location is currently being used as a staging area for the Housing Authority's Development Project. Mr. Hunter also stated that a decision will be made on the future of the property once the Housing Authority's project is complete.

Councilmember Johnson inquired about an update on the Popular Springs Park walking trail. City Engineer Angel Moore stated that the Public Works Department has completed clearing on the property to include ditch work. Ms. Moore also stated that the contractor will complete paving soon. Todd Hughes, Parks and Recreation Director, stated that gates will be added to the entrance and goals will be placed on the basketball courts once everything else has been completed.

Councilmember Johnson stated that she received a call concerning cutting grass and maintenance at the City's cemeteries. City Engineer Angel Moore stated that the cemetery crew is currently down 2 workers out of a total of 6 including the supervisor. Ms. Moore also stated that the limbs and debris division is operating at 27 percent. Ms. Moore further stated that the entire department is short staffed. Councilmember Johnson asked if the City partners with a temporary employment agency to help with shortage. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the City does work with temporary employment agencies for several City departments. Mr. Hunter also stated that there is a work force shortage all over the nation. Eliza Phillips, Human Resource Generalist, stated that the challenges in hiring are the number of applicants that apply for jobs and the number of people who are not passing the drug screening or background checks. Mr. Hunter stated that the City is doing the best that we can and prays that things turn around soon. Mayor Lowe stated that trouble doesn't always last and nothing comes to stay.

Councilmember Day inquired about the issuing of building permits. Councilmember Day asked if a person had to pay all of the fees up front to obtain a permit. Ray Rogers, Deputy Building Official, explained the permit process. Mr. Rogers stated that the cost and time frame depends on the type of permit purchased.

Councilmember Day inquired about an update of the Downtown Redevelopment Plan. Tracie Hadaway, Planning Director, stated that the plat has been received from the consultant and future meetings have been planned. Ms. Hadaway also stated that an update will be given after the meetings.

Councilmember Day stated that he has received several phone calls concerning updates on completion of Public Works service request in District Three. Councilmember Day also stated that he informed the callers that the City is short on workforce staff and will get to the request as soon as they possibly can. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that several employees are out for several different reasons. Mr. Hunter also stated that the City contracts out when possible but even the contractors are short of help at this time.

Councilmember Day inquired about the lighting at the Garrett Harrison Stadium. Councilmember Day asked if the project would be complete in time for football season. Todd Hughes, Parks and Recreation Director, stated that the project will be completed before the first home game.

Councilmember Day inquired about an update on the Old Seale Road Bridge Project. Angel Moore, City Engineer, stated that ALDOT is currently reviewing the plans. Ms. Moore also stated that the project is moving along.

Mayor Lowe stated that the City is still experiencing a work force shortage. Mayor Lowe encouraged everyone to be patient if service request are not completed immediately. Mayor Lowe stated that mission critical things will get the deserving attention first. City Manager Wallace Hunter stated that the City is doing the very best that they can with the number of workers that we have. Mr. Hunter also stated that several complaints have been received concerning the Utilities Department rate increase. Mr. Hunter further stated that Alabama Power, Alagasco and the Cable Company have all gone up on their rates as well. Mr. Hunter stated that the rate on supplies has also gone up. Mr. Hunter also stated that we are living in a time where things are going up and workforce is down not just in Phenix City but the entire nation. Mayor Lowe stated that Council and the City Manager have done a great job by doing things the right way for the betterment of Phenix City. Mr. Hunter encouraged everyone to look at the big picture as decisions are made now for the future.

Mayor Lowe went over the agenda items.

City Attorney James McKoon reviewed agenda claims with Council.

There being nothing further to discuss, the meeting adjourned until 3:00 p.m., Monday, August 15, 2022.